

Status of NH National Guard deployed units as of May 31, 2004

Total number of NH National Guardsmen: 2,700

NH Army National Guard: 1,700

138 in Iraq, 22 in Afghanistan, 20 at Camp Shelby, MS

NH Air National Guard: 1,000

3 in Iraq, 1 in Germany

Number of NH Guardsmen deployed overseas: 185

1. Combat Service Support Team, 3rd Brigade. 17 soldiers representing different NH Army National Guard units and specialties in Afghanistan to provide mentorship to Afghan National Army. Scheduled to redeploy in July.

2. 260th Air Traffic Control Squadron, Operations Support Flight, Mission Support Flight – NH Air National Guard based at Pease in Newington. 2 airmen from ATC, 1 airman from Mission Support Flight in Iraq. In June, 13 airmen from Security Forces deploying to Diego Garcia, 1 airmen from Logistics Readiness Squadron deploying to Iraq. In the last month, 5 airmen have returned from Iraq and 5 from Diego Garcia.

3. 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, Rear Area Operations Center. 28 soldiers representing different NH Army National Guard units for command and control mission in Iraq.

4. 1159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) based in Concord. 110 soldiers conducting medical evacuation missions in Iraq.

5. NH Army National Guard Medical Team. 5 soldiers supporting medical missions in Afghanistan.

6. NH Army National Guard Support Team, 20 soldiers deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Training at Camp Shelby, MS. The majority of the soldiers will be deploying to Iraq as part of 2nd Brigade, 28th Infantry Division Combat Team, a Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit.

7. 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery based in Berlin with armories in Lancaster, Littleton, Plymouth, Woodsville, Lebanon and Franklin. Beginning on June 18, a group of soldiers from the Salvadoran Armed Forces artillery brigade will participate in a two-week exchange with 2nd Battalion during its annual training in Gagetown, Canada as part of the NH National Guard's State Partnership Program with El Salvador.

UPDATES FROM UNIT COMMANDERS IN THEATER

Editor's Note: The following updates were emailed by the unit commanders. They were slightly edited for grammar and operational security. About 185 NH Guardsmen are currently deployed in the Global War on Terrorism.

Combat Service Support Team, 3rd Brigade

Lt. Col. Ralph Huber of Newmarket is the commander of the Combat Service Support Team, which arrived in Afghanistan in August 2004 and is providing mentorship and training in a variety of specialties to the 5th Kandak, 3rd Brigade of the Afghan National Army (ANA). A kandak is a battalion in the Afghanistan Army. Huber's team is scheduled to redeploy to the US in July

May has been an interesting month for the members of the 5th Kandak Embedded Training Team. The team completed several missions; two in eastern Afghanistan and several in the Kabul region plus ongoing operations in other areas as part of the expanded team effort.

In early May, the team began operations in support of the Brigade's Second Embedded Training Team operating in the vicinity of Asadabad in eastern Afghanistan. These operations were designed to establish a forward Afghan National Army presence in the area. As part of the support operation, **Capt. David Burris of Arizona** and **Staff Sgt. Leo Enos of Lancaster** deployed with soldiers from the 2nd Embedded Training Team. They occupied a Forward Operating Base outside the city and began patrols of the local area. These patrols were designed to establish rapport with the local populace and foster acceptance of the new ANA base. Later in the week, additional Embedded Tactical Trainers from the 2nd and 5th arrived for an expanded operation in the area.

The purpose of the follow-on mission was to flush insurgents from the village of Ganjgal and execute a medical assistance visit for local Afghans. The mission was commanded by **Maj. Thomas Mack of the South Carolina Army National Guard** and included myself, **Burris, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gilbert Colon of Rochester, Staff Sgt. Timothy Farrell of Hooksett, and Enos**. Special Force soldiers and Marines also assisted. The mission was a complete success.

After securing the village, teams of ETTs and ANA began patrols to the surrounding communities to inform the villagers of their mission and about the MEDCAP scheduled for later in the week. At the patrol base, **Enos**, and another sergeant befriended village children, and organized a sling shot competition for them.

The end result of all of this activity was that the local people began to accept the ANA. Later that week, when the MEDCAP team arrived, over 800 villagers to include a high number of women turned out for health checks and medical treatment. The MEDCAP commander attributed this to the effort of the ETTs taking the time to make friends of the local people.

"By making friends in this village we made it harder for insurgents to use it as a base of operations in the future," **Enos** said.

As this mission was coming to a conclusion, the 5th Kandak was completing checkpoint missions outside of Kabul. The purpose of these missions was to screen vehicle traffic for illegal contraband, usually weapons or drugs, and to prevent insurgents from entering the city.

Leading the successful mission was **Capt. John Quinlan of Mont Vernon, Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Barrett of Canterbury, Capt. Arnaldo Huertas of California, and Master Sgt. Eric Straub of Nashua**. The ANA detained several individuals and confiscated various items of interest.

“The ANA executed their best mission so far,” Straub said. “It was well planned and thought out. It was a truly outstanding effort on their part.”

The kandak has also made significant progress towards becoming an operational Combat Service Support Kandak. **Quinlan, Huertas, and Farrell** have been working closely with the kandak senior staff to make it happen. **Quinlan** and **Huertas** worked with ANA **Maj. (first name not available) Waheed** to design a new kandak support operations center while **Farrell** worked with the kandak logistics staff to make the brigade supply depot operational. Both projects are a major undertaking and bringing the depot online will be the culmination of several months of planning and hard work.

In other areas, **Maj. Nicholas Adler of Portland, Maine, 1st Lt. Brett Vuyovich of Haverhill** and **Staff Sgt. Roy Lowes of Wolfboro Falls** continue to work with the 30th Kandak in Kandahar. Their focus continues to be preparing the kandak for upcoming operations. **Vuyovich** has been working to train the mortar platoon while **Lowes** continues to work with the medics and establish an operational medical clinic.

Back in Kabul, **Lt. Col. Christopher Conley of Wolfboro** continues his work with the ANA Central Corps surgeon to improve the level of care at the Pol-e-Charki Medical clinic and **Capt. Scott Loring of Belmont** continues his work with the ANA Personnel Holding Company. Both officers are doing exceptional work which will continue to benefit the ANA long after they depart.

Brig. Gen. John Weeden of Concord, commander of the NH Army National Guard, traveled to Afghanistan this month and visited our soldiers both in Pol-e-Charki and Kandahar. The visit was a real morale boost for everyone. In Pole-e-Charki, we presented **Weeden** with a team patch to commemorate his visit. **Weeden** presented each of our soldiers with his Commander’s Coin in recognition of their achievements.

During his visit, **Weeden** promoted Straub to the rank of master sergeant in a ceremony at the Brigade operations center on May 4. I (**Huber**) was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel on May 21. I was pinned by **Sharbat** and **Lt. Col. (first name not available) Marquart** of the 5th ANA Kandak and the 3rd ETT brigade commanders.

“It was great honor to participate in the promotion of a US Army officer especially one who has become both a friend and colleague,” Sharbat said. The ceremony was followed by a joint US/ANA luncheon.

1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, Rear Area Operations Center

Col. David Mercieri of Barrington is commander of 1-172nd FA, RAOC, which is supporting a command and control mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The team arrived in Iraq in December.

The 1-172nd FA RAOC has had a very busy month. One of our primary missions is to renovate existing buildings on the installation to provide office and working space for our tenant units. Most of the existing buildings on the installation have a mix of European construction (English, French & Yugoslavian) as well Iraqi craftsmanship. Unfortunately many of the buildings are sub-U.S. standard and that is where our challenge begins. We select buildings based on there location and their structural capability. To date we have renovated 13 buildings and 6 more have been recently scheduled. These projects can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.

Although **Maj. Mark Leahey of Rochester** may have many titles one of them is the Army Consequence Management Officer. He has brought all the installations agencies together to work jointly incase of a mass casualty incident were to occur on our installation. On March 31, we had our first mass casualty exercise which revealed that a few important operational procedure changes needed to be made, which is typical when the Army and Air force conduct joint operations. Now the two services are working more closely together to be ready if an emergency were to occur.

The smell of Ben Gay permeated through the Garrison Headquarters the day after our very successful, First Annual Iraq-Boston Marathon. For the Garrison Command, **Spc. David Day of Brookline** completed the 26.2 mile course in 5:11:33, job well done! There were three Garrison Command relay teams: the Sand Snails, **Capt. Chip Copper of Newburyport, MA, Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Plante of Easton, Staff Sgt. Timothy Swan of Concord** and **Leahey** came in first for the Garrison relay teams with a time of 3:54:41. The Bad Monkeys, **Spc. Chris Adams of Revere, MA, 1st Sgt. Don Fortin of Bedford, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bill Mims of Alabama** and **Staff Sgt. Haase of Alabama** came in second with a time of 4:10:08. In third were the Sand Flies with **Capt. Andrew Anderson of Nottingham, Maj. Charles Coates of Florida, Maj. Greg Blackwell of Dover, and Sgt. 1st Class Niemi (first name not available) of Virginia**. All of the soldiers received one of the coveted Boston Athletic Association, (BAA), Marathon medals.

Capt. Rodney Freeman of York, ME, who organized the event, initially proposed that he and a few running friends were going to run a marathon on Patriots Day to celebrate the Boston Marathon. He asked the BAA if they would like to sponsor the run and the BAA came through with official race medals, certificates and t-shirts. The Outdoor Life Network took film that was broadcasted during the coverage of the Boston Marathon. In all, there were 350 race participants and 103 race volunteers, with runners from Britain, Romania, and Italy and from six different coalition bases including a contingent from Baghdad.

Freeman organized and executed a great event that gained international publicity as well as throughout Iraq and back home in New Hampshire and the US. *Continued on the following page*

We continue to receive letters and cards from school children from throughout our State and the RAOC soldiers wanted to thank them for their support and the great art work that has accompanied many of the letters. Also we would like to thank all the organizations that have supported us as we continue our deployment.

I would also like to introduce our newest team member **Staff Sgt. Matthew Cashman of Somersworth, who has recently joined our team.**

As we continue with our mission our team remains focused. We continuously strive to make a difference at our base.

1159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

Maj. Keith Farrar of Ossipee is the commander of the 1159th Medical Company, which arrived in Iraq in February. The unit is conducting medical evacuation (medevac) mission in northern Iraq.

The 1159th continues to perform its mission well in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. To date the unit has flown 582 missions, transporting 859 patients in 1,302 flight hours. We have also moved numerous boxes of blood and medical supplies, as well as doctors and nurses throughout Iraq from Baghdad to Mosul.

The unit continues to receive praise for its work. Several members of the unit have been recognized for their help in establishing training standards for the developing Army Flight Nurse Program. These individuals worked with the staff of the 228th CSH (Combat Support Hospital) in an effort to improve the quality of care our soldiers receive during medical transfers between facilities and medevac flights.

The maintenance performed on our aircraft and the Operational Readiness or OR rate has been receiving notice from higher command. The unit has been able to consistently keep 14 of 15 aircraft flying and available for Medevac missions. This OR rate has been averaging between 88% and 93% in an environment that is not hospitable to aircraft operations, and exceeds Army maintenance expectations during a period of high operational tempo.

The unit has also hosted several news reporters from Fox News and a photographer from Newsweek. Both news organizations were interested in following a typical American soldier from point of injury through the field hospitals to the US. The photographers and reporters were given permission to accompany the flight crews and medics on numerous missions and recorded members of the 1159th at work.

The weather is starting to get a bit warmer; the temperatures on the flight ramp and inside the cockpits have been recorded as high as 44 degrees centigrade. This makes for some interesting working conditions on the aircraft and vehicles. With the darker paint schemes, the surfaces of the vehicles and aircraft can get dangerously hot and burn your skin. Gloves are often required to be worn when working on these items during the midday to avoid burns.

Additionally, the flight crews find that the occasional quart of water dumped down their back during flight works to help keep them cooler. When the wind blows, it feels like you are sitting in front of a hair dryer. *Continued on the following page*

We have also experienced some interesting sandstorms that effectively bring flight operations to a halt. These storms raise havoc with our operations and leave a fine coat of grit on all the equipment and aircraft. The storms are accompanied by high winds, which drive the fine talcum-like dust into every corner of the living areas. During the height of one storm, the air inside the operations building had a visible red/orange tinge to it as the wind sought access through every available window and door opening and probed for cracks in the building. The net result was to leave everyone feeling like a dirty, glazed donut.

Morale continues to be high with the troops. We are starting to see some soldiers that we evacuated from the field return to duty. Several crews got to experience meeting soldiers that they last saw bandaged and bundled up on litter pans, walking around, and being returned to their units by the same aircraft and crew that evacuated them from the field. This feeling of coming full circle, of saving soldiers, speaks to higher feelings and pride in a job well done for the whole company.

NH Army Guard Medical Team

1st Lt. Christopher Meals of Woburn, MA, a physician's assistant, is team leader of the five-soldier team, which arrived in Afghanistan in January to support a variety of medial missions. The unit's name and details about its location and activity are classified.

The last month has been a bit slow. The highlight was a gentleman with a strangulated inguinal hernia that required emergency surgery at the combat support hospital.

It can be a bit challenging practicing medicine with the limited capabilities of a Battalion Aid Station. Two of four patients sent out with abdominal pain required surgery.

Staff Sgt. Joanne Desruisseaux of Manchester treated a 2-year-old Afghanistan girl with second degree burns to her arm. **Sgt. John Wilder of Stoddard** did a great job suturing up an Afghanistan man with a large head laceration from being struck with a rock.

Other than that, not much else was going on. We continue to treat the locals on a semi-regular basis. Technically, we are supposed to only provide initial treatment for injuries or illness threatening life, limb, or eye sight. Infection is one of the leading causes of death in Afghanistan. Therefore, all wounds are treated to prevent life threatening infection. Generally, we treat anyone that comes to us as long it is within our capability. It is the right thing to do. Plus, it is a major contributor to us maintaining a good rapport with the locals.

I paid a follow-up visit with the 8-year-old girl who required her eye to be removed due to a severe infection. She is doing well. She probably would have developed meningitis and died if the ophthalmologist didn't remove the eye. We are working closely with the ophthalmologist who is in the process of obtaining her a prosthetic (fake eye). She will be fitting three months post-op.

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